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CONFLICT BETWEEN PRIVATE GERMAN COMMISSIONS AND
THE ARMAMENT INSPECTORATE NETHERLANDS OVER
THE SPOILIATION OF HOLLAND

During the early stages of the occupation of Holland, an enormous number of commissions, etc., descended on Holland to secure the capacity, supplies, equipment, etc., of Dutch plants for the needs of the individual German plant or group. This unorganized spoliation conflicted with the aim of the Armed Forces of preserving the Dutch economy as a going concern for the direct needs of the Army, Air Force, and Navy. On 14 August 1940, therefore, the Armed Forces High Commander for the Netherlands issued an order prohibiting unauthorized interference with the economy of the Netherlands. Under this order, all transactions were to be handled through the Armament Inspectorate for the Netherlands, the Plenipotentiary for Motor Transport (GKB), and agencies of the Plenipotentiary for Economics (WB) for the Netherlands, representing the interests of the German Ministry of Economics.

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ACTIVITIES OF THE GERMAN ARMAMENTS INSPECTORATE IN 1940

The German Armament Inspectorate (1940) for the Netherlands consisted of 7 officers, 16 civilian officials, 16 enlisted men, and 8 civilian employees. By late May-early June 1940, negotiations were already in progress with Dutch firms concerning the production of war material for the German Armed Forces. Dutch resistance, such as it was, was quickly negated by direct intervention.

By 2 June 1940, 98 plants have been investigated, 61 of which could be considered for military production. This was based on German seizure of production originally intended for the Dutch armed forces.

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By the end of October 1940, a Dutch labor force of 42,000 had been sent to Germany, including some 4,500 metalwork specialists. Added to this were 21,000 "border-crossers," who accepted employment in the Reich.

Also in October, an additional 70,000 square meters of torpedo-protection nets were finished, and orders for 190,000 more square meters placed. The number of workers engaged in this production has been increased to 2,200. The remainder of the 4,300 bicycles were delivered, and orders for 30,000 more placed, about 17,000 of which can go to the Reich.

By December, 254 plants employing 75,000 workers were assigned by the Armament Inspectorate to production for the Reich and its armed forces. A labor force of 101,100 workers was procured for employment in Germany. Of 167,174 unemployed rounded up for possible employment in the Reich, only 45% were considered physically healthy enough for this. The attempt by the Navy to recruit 3,000 shipyard workers for employment in Germany has not yet met with great success, for the Dutch workers are not particularly eager to go to Germany. The experience of the past months shows that the Dutch worker works best in Holland; moreover, the Dutch labor requirement has not yet been satisfied.

June 1942 -- According to an official German decree, all Jews in the age group 16-40 resident in Holland are subject to deportation. In order to avoid disruption in the textile, leather, and junk businesses, the Armament Inspectorate has reached an agreement with the appropriate branch of the Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst - SD) whereby 2,500 Jews will be provisionally reinstated.

The Armament Inspectorate finds it necessary again to warn the authorities in the Reich to place the skilled workers sent to Germany on the jobs for which they are fitted, and not to treat them as unskilled laborers, as has previously been the case.

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It has proved necessary that the plants conduct training courses in order to fill the gaps in the skilled worker force caused by the shipment of skilled workers to Germany.

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